

When email becomes overwhelming

September 29, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [8 Comments](#)
Filed under: [Advertising and Marketing](#), [Musings](#), [email marketing](#)

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When email becomes overwhelming, it becomes a time waster and an obstacle to doing anything productive.

Normally, the most productive time in my whole day for writing and accomplishing a marketing goal is the first two or three hours of my day. Most days, I wake up around 4 or 5 am and work for two or three hours while I drink a pot of coffee. Then, it's time for breakfast and dealing with the daily chores, such as checking the social networks I manage and moderate, responding to comments on my blogs, playing on Facebook for awhile, making sure none of my major sites have been hacked (by looking at their home pages), and dealing with email.

I've tried for over a decade to make it easy to find me and contact me via email. I've put my email address all over the web, in more places than I'll ever remember, and now it's coming back to bite me in the butt.

I started with email on the old ARPA network, before the Internet, before the Web, before Google, before most of the things we take for granted now. I remember when I knew (personally) only three people with email addresses besides myself. It wasn't unusual back in those almost-prehistoric days to send an email and then call them on the phone to see if they got it.

I remember being happy when I got an email from a friend. It was a joy that was almost like receiving a birthday or Christmas card in the mail.

Those days are long gone, however.

As useful as email is, now it has become an anchor around my neck. A weight I pull uphill every morning. A cool drink of water just out of my reach. A chore to be endured rather than enjoyed.

This morning, I waded through 2286 emails (that is not an exaggeration — it's the actual count) and deleted all but 66 of them.

I have all sorts of spam blocking rules in place, I'm using two spam blocking services, and I still manually go through all the subject lines on my email account in my browser to delete all the ones that are of no interest, are spam, or otherwise just clutter my inbox.

It took over two and a half hours just to scan all the subject lines and pull the gold nuggets out of the mud hole. (I was going to say something else a lot more gross, but I went back and edited it before publishing.)

Then I deleted and purged all those I didn't want.

From that point, it took less than 30 seconds to download all the little gold nuggets into Eudora, my business email client of choice. Later today, I'll work through those emails. Some I'll read and discard. Others I'll read and save. Others I'll skim and save for later.

I've already responded to the three that needed a response and replied to a friend with a personal email.

Without all the damned spam and garbage, I could have done this task in less than five minutes and enjoyed it.

WELCOME!



John Dilbeck

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So, the time has come to get this millstone off of my neck.

Before the end of the year, I'll be closing my public email account and I've already switched to two new email services. One will be a strictly private address for good friends and family, only. If I tell you that email address, it's because I like corresponding with you and I trust you not to give it to anyone else. Not many will ever know that address. I'll check it a couple of times a day and respond as quickly as possible.

I've set up a new business email address and I'm not sure how I'm going to use it yet. One thing I know, I'm never going to make it public, in an effort to avoid the spam harvesters out there and the lowlives who use them.

I will go through my contact list and I'll be sending some of you one or both of my new email addresses. Before the end of the year, I'll change my old address and put an autoresponder on it saying that the account is closed and referring someone to my [Contact Us](#) page on [AYearFromNow.com](#).

I'm hoping that this will slow down the torrent of unwanted email to a trickle, but I don't believe it will stop all the spam.

When I first set up my public email address, it was a real status symbol to have not only your name as a domain, but your name as the email account on that domain. Now, everyone who has thought ahead has their name as a domain, even if they do nothing with it other than to keep it out of the hands of those who would pretend to be someone they aren't.

I'll be unsubscribing from all lists and RSS feeds and resubscribing with my new address. I'll go through the 1,314 online accounts I have and either close them or change my contact address. (Now, you know why it probably won't get done until near the end of the year.)

I narrowed my focus earlier this year, and I'm going to narrow it again over the next few months.

I may never get all of this back under control, but I intend to do my best.

What about you?

How do you manage your email?

Do you have multiple accounts for different purposes? Do you use one good client and filter incoming email into multiple inboxes based on subject and/or priority?

Do you fight the spam you receive or endure and ignore it?

I'm looking for real advice here.

I'll continue using Eudora for my business email and I'm using Apple's Mail program for my private friends and family account. So, don't suggest that I switch desktop clients. It ain't gonna happen.

I'll be using gmail.com as part of my business email solution and another service I won't mention for my private email.

So, what works for you? Do you have something that works, or are you as overwhelmed as I am right now?

What's your story?

Act on your dream!

JD

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Tags: [email](#), [productivity](#), [spam](#)

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September 6, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [8 Comments](#)

Filed under: [Affiliate Marketing](#), [Sitesell and Site Build It](#)

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- The co-sponsors Daily is out - read this Twitter newspaper on <http://bit.ly/cUvEQk> (39 contributions today) [10 hrs ago](#)
- It's a wonderful day to sit on the porch and rest and enjoy the beauty that surrounds us. I like cool mornings and warm afternoons. [13 hrs ago](#)
- The #[squidmark](#) Daily is out - read this Twitter newspaper on <http://bit.ly/9O1OGS> (1 contributions today) [1 day ago](#)
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A couple of days ago, I came across another reason to like [SBI](#) so much.

I received an email from the security department at HostGator that one of my oldest websites had been compromised and several phishing scripts had been installed. They found and deleted them and then I had to take several hours and look through the whole site, delete several sections, update scripts, remove some I was no longer using, change passwords, and generally wasted half a day because of someone messing with my site.

At one time, that site was my biggest money-maker, but life intervened, North Carolina passed their new tax nexus laws, I was dropped by several large affiliate programs, and now the site earns practically nothing.

Still, it's one of my oldest and favorite sites, so I keep it around.

I used to be one of those people who didn't really like it that SBI didn't allow us to use PHP, PERL, and other scripts on our sites. Now, I'm one of those who is happy that they don't. It makes it much harder for someone to compromise our sites.

Over the last 13 years, I've built dozens of websites, blogs, communities, and forums, most using publicly available scripts. I'm one of those people who has to test everything and come to my own conclusions based on my experience and not what someone tells me.

I've wasted several of those years, as a result.

In almost every case, when one of my sites became popular and started producing some real income, it was hacked and destroyed. I would fix the problem, rebuild the site, and go on. Eventually, each of them became more trouble than they were worth and I let them die.

Now, I'm down to a few sites and the only ones that have NEVER given me even a minute of trouble are my sites powered by [SBI](#). Not once.

Because of the changes in my affiliate status with several companies, I've been earning only a fraction of what I used to earn, but most of my attention has been focused on surviving and conquering this cancer that tried to kill me earlier this year. I'm making progress and we're kicking that cancer's butt. I'm getting stronger every week.

In the future, I'll be deleting most of my sites that no longer perform as they once did. My brother is also having health problems and I'll be taking down a large site I built for him, too.

I'm no longer enamored with blogs, forums, and communities built with commonly available scripts.

So, now I'm rethinking everything I learned and I'm going to apply what does work to reorganizing and building my SBI sites and planning new niche sites for the future.

I've always been a huge fan of SBI and all my big sites worked well for about ten years because I applied what I learned from [Make Your Site Sell!](#) to them.

Times have changed, though, and I'm tired of experimenting with everything to see for myself what works and what doesn't.

I'll be redoubling my efforts to use SBI the way it is intended.

I've started going through the new [video action guide](#) and it's helping me relearn how to use SBI effectively.

I'm tired of hackers, malicious scripts, rebuilding sites, upgrading scripts, and all the other tasks that I don't have to deal with on SBI-powered sites.

Yes, I'm a propeller-headed geek and I love programming and learning new things. I've enjoyed all my experiments. I've learned lots of things that don't work and some that do.

Now, it's time to focus on doing more of what really works and leaving all the red shiny balls that keep bouncing across my path for someone else to play with.

Or you can just do what I'm doing now — switch to SBI and not have to deal with all the headaches.

[Compare SBI with traditional hosting](#). Decide for yourself.

I know what works for me.

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On most of my pages, I want the reader to focus on one of two things. My Most Wanted Response (MWR) is usually for the reader to click on an affiliate link or a Google AdSense Ad. Preferably an affiliate link, because they generally pay better.

On most pages, my secondary response or fall-back response is to click on an AdSense Ad. They're going to leave my page anyway, so I might as well make something from it when they do.

This is not always true, however. I'll be removing AdSense ads from some of the pages that don't earn much and I'll probably be removing the AdSense ads from the bottom of the pages, because they earn only a fraction of what the ads at the top of the page earn.

And, on some of my pages, I don't even try to monetize visits. They are there purely for inspiration, motivation, or information. Not every page has to be a money maker.

So, why am I talking about all of this?

I think that what is important in a website (if we're using it to earn a living) is to give the reader good information (as good as we're able to prepare and present), and then only one or two choices for further actions. When there are too many choices, it leads to confusion, and confusion leads to inaction, or clicking the back button on the browser.

So, I'm all for simple, fast-loading designs that offer a couple of choices for actions on the page.

The exception is site sponsorship, as I mentioned earlier. When it comes to a business owner deciding to sponsor my site, then I want their link to be presented on every page of the site, and a third right column is a good place to put that. The use of includes makes it much easier to maintain.

JD, what does all that have to do with Sitesell changing the name from Site Build It! to SBI?

It may not mean much to you, but it is very important to me.

SBI is much more than a tool for building a page on a website, or even an interlinking group of pages. The actual building of the site is much less important than the tools that make it so easy to brainstorm topics, to prioritize those topics, and to design a site blue print so that we can present the information that is important in our niche in the best way possible so that we'll rank highly in the search engine results and get lots of free visitors from the search engines.

[SBI](#) offers those tools and more, and all at the low price of only \$300 per year per site.

Even though I'm not physically able to make use of all of this right now, I'm happy to pay the fee, because my sites continue to get thousands of page views every month, and generate some income while I'm recovering — all with little effort on my part.

I think the emphasis on the site builder in SBI was a good thing a few years ago, but not so much now. As the tools built into SBI continue to grow, expand, and mature, I believe the totality of the product is much more important than any part of it.

I would never again consider trying to build a website in a niche without doing the research and brainstorming that SBI makes so easy. And, it's not only in the initial brainstorming and planning phase that this is important. We continually revise our approach as we find changes in the topics and keywords that are important to our readers. This means that it is easier to keep on top of the subject with SBI than it is without it.


I think that's what is important.

What do you think?

 Like  Be the first of your friends to like this.

Tags: [SBI](#), [Site Build It](#), [Sitesell](#)

Changing blog themes may have unintentional consequences

 Like  Be the first of your friends to like this.

A couple of days ago, I decided that I wanted my blog themes to be simpler and cleaner, so I switched from the theme I was using on two of my blogs to the one I'm now using on this one and on [John Dilbeck And Friends](#). Currently, I'm using the Revolution Code Blue theme by Brian Gardner. If you're interested, there's a link in the footer to the theme.

I decided that I wanted the content in a large left column and the widgets in the right column. Since I put a lot of stuff in the right column (recent posts, recent comments, top commentator, links to affiliate sites, links to other blogs, several RSS feeds, and a few more things), I decided to have two right columns.

I still haven't decided if I like how it's set-up yet, or not. I may be changing things in the next few days.

Installing and activating the theme was easy, but then I had to spend a couple of hours adjusting the widgets to where I wanted them and modifying a few of them.

I think blogs are inherently difficult to navigate, so I wanted to make sure I had easy-to-find links to the pages, recent posts, and recent comments. That took only a few moments to set up.

Then, I left to do other things that really needed doing, like resting and taking naps.

In the interim, I was talking to a friend on Facebook about his new blog and how I thought it was hard to navigate. The only way to find other posts was to go to the home page and scroll down.

I wrote and suggested that he add at least the recent posts and comments, especially if he wanted to foster conversations on what he wrote via comments. I also suggested that he have "breadcrumbs" at the top and bottom of his posts that would point to previous and next posts.

Today, I came back and looked at both blogs where I'd changed the theme and noticed that they no longer had the breadcrumb navigation links. That's when I realized that they were part of the coding of the previous theme I'd been using and it wasn't included in this one.

So, I did some digging on another blog that still uses the previous theme and found the code to add the breadcrumbs to this and the other blog.

When I did it, it looked horrible. There was overlapping between the navigation links and the Title of the blog post. So, I had to spend some time modifying the CSS code so everything would look okay.

While I was at it, I decided to put the AdSense ads back at the top and bottom of each post. I'll give it a month or so and see how it produces. If it's profitable on these blogs, I'll leave them. If not, poof, they'll be deleted.

So, while it took only a few minutes to change the theme, it has taken five or six hours of tweaking and adjusting to get it to what I want, and I've only seen them in Safari on Macs, so far.

I had some good reasons for changing the themes, but I really didn't expect it to take this much work to get them back to where I wanted them.

Just as I was about to call it completed for now, I noticed that the new theme was showing all the pages on this blog in a horizontal navigation bar right below the header, and then obscuring most of them. I didn't like how that looked and I didn't like that it showed some of the pages that weren't the most important right below the header.

So, I took a few minutes and removed the code that automatically generated the list of pages and replaced it with hard links to what I consider to be the most important pages that should be shown in that part of the navigation menu. It was easy to do, but I almost didn't see it.

I wonder what else I haven't noticed, yet.

Have you had any interesting experiences when changing the theme of your blog(s)? Are you using free or premium themes? Do you have any advice to offer your fellow bloggers?

Tags: [navigation](#), [themes](#), [widgets](#)

That was not my last post to 21st Century Affiliate Marketing

August 20, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [9 Comments](#)

Filed under: [Affiliate Marketing](#), [Blogging](#), [Facebook](#), [John Dilbeck](#), [Musings](#)

 Like  10 people like this.

Surprise! I'm back. (grin)

Apparently, the reports of my death were greatly exaggerated, and it looks like that applies to this blog, too.

I came close to dying back in March, and things weren't looking too good in May, either.

I'm happy to tell you that I'm getting better. I have a long way to go before I'm fully recovered, but I'm making substantial progress.

I wrote what I thought would be the last post to this blog in the middle of May, 2010. Since then, there have been some significant events in my life.

On April 1, 2010, my friend and surgeon resected my intestines, removed my gall bladder, and removed an 8-lb colon cancer. He was surprised to find the tumor in one large contained mass, rather than spread throughout my abdomen. That was a very lucky break.

Other, relatively minor surgeries followed.

A PET scan showed that I had suspicious spots in both thyroid glands and in the right lobe of my liver.

A biopsy of each thyroid gland showed that the growths were benign, not cancer. Happy dance!

A biopsy of the tumor in my liver showed it was benign. Happy dance!

However, a radiologist on the oncology team that would be doing the procedure on my liver called me at home from his vacation and said the biopsy report on my liver had to be wrong.

He had seen the scans (two of them) and knew from the look and the growth that it was cancer. He didn't want to rain on my parade, but he said — emphatically — that I should get the biopsy redone, and he would do it himself, if I wanted. I talked it over with my daughter and decided to have the biopsy redone. Dr. Moore did it using a slightly different technique and was right. It was colon cancer that had metastasized to my liver. At least, we knew it was something that had to be dealt with, as soon as possible.

In July, 2010, I went to Mission Hospital in Asheville, NC, and Dr. Moore performed a radio frequency ablation of the tumor in my liver. It is good that I was a good candidate for this, because traditional surgery on the right lobe of the liver is a very serious operation.

Basically, what he did was this: insert three needles (that are connected to a radio frequency generator) into my liver so that they surround the tumor. Turn on the generator to cook the tumor (think of this as a microwave oven).

Because of the size of the tumor, he had to use three needles and the results looked good on the ultrasound right after the procedure.

I went for a CT scan and checkup with Dr. Moore earlier this week and got the good news. There is no sign of cancer in my liver, the "cooked" portion completely enveloped the tumor and some surrounding tissue, and there are no signs of bleeding complications. Very good news, indeed.

So, now the surgical interventions are all done and I'm on my second round (of 24 total) of chemotherapy treatments.

Now, instead of expecting to die from this (as it looked back in March), we're working together to cure it. That's a huge change in expectations and perspective in only three months.

I'm a long way from being my old self. I'm tired all the time and have trouble thinking straight, but I'm definitely improving.

So, instead of closing this blog, I've updated it to the latest version of WordPress, changed the theme, and spruced it up for another few years of talking about affiliate marketing.

I will not be posting as often as I did previously, but this blog is not going to just sit here, either. I will definitely be putting more effort into building evergreen, content-rich, hierarchically-organized websites than I will into blogging, but both have a part to play in my marketing plans.



I want to thank everyone who sent me their encouragement and support in the comments here, on my Facebook profile, and in email and phone calls. It meant a lot, and still does. I think your outpouring of support, encouragement, and prayers is one of the major reasons that I'm looking forward to conquering this cancer, instead of being its victim.

So, that's enough about me. Let's get back to talking about affiliate marketing.

(Now, I have to remember how I added that subscribe via email form on this blog. Scratching head...)

Act on your dream!

JD

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Tags: [cancer](#), [health](#)

This is my last post to 21st Century Affiliate Marketing

May 14, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [17 Comments](#)

Filed under: [Affiliate Marketing](#), [Blogging](#), [John Dilbeck](#), [Marketing](#), [Success and Failure](#)

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Before I say anything else, I want to thank all of you who have been regular readers and who have made this blog better by sharing your thoughts and comments with all of us. You know who you are.

This is the last post to this blog and I will be shutting it down in the next few days or weeks, as I have the time and energy. I'm closing my marketing business and I'm out of affiliate marketing.

It's amazing how much of a difference two months can make in one's life.

Two months ago, I went to the emergency room because I could not get out of bed. After 7 units of blood, I felt a bit stronger, but that lead to the discovery of colon cancer, which was followed shortly after with intestinal surgery, gall bladder removal, and today I learned that I need surgery for cancer in my liver and a biopsy for possible cancer in one of my thyroid glands.

For the foreseeable future, I'll be putting my energy into kicking these cancers' butts. I don't intend to let them beat me, but you never know.

I don't know for sure what will happen to this domain name. If you're a regular reader and contributor to this blog, I'm willing to listen to your ideas.

It's been a wild ride for the last several years, and I'm sad to see the ride coming to an end.

I plan to continue posting (now and then) to [JohnDilbeckAndFriends.com](#) and to my Facebook account at [facebook.com/johndilbeck](#).



Thanks for reading, contributing, and making affiliate marketing just a bit more interesting as

We shared ideas and thoughts about the subject.

Continued success to you.

All the best,

JD



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Tags: [Affiliate Marketing](#), [conclusion](#), [illness](#)

Building a serious business website that gets results

March 17, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [3 Comments](#)

Filed under: [Advertising and Marketing](#), [Attracting Visitors](#), [Sitesell and Site Build It](#), [Web Services](#), [Webhosting](#)

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I have people asking me all the time how I get so many people to visit my websites every month, and I think most of them think I have some kind of magic trick up my sleeve. That's not it at all.

The secret?

Hard work, lots of content that people want to read, pages optimized on particular keywords and phrases to help the search engines know what they are about, and continually updating the information as it ages and things change. That's all it takes.

No tricks. No fancy SEO techniques. Just simple HTML pages (on my big static sites) that are each built around a particular topic that fits within the site's main topic.

As you may know by now, if you read my blogs or sites regularly, I learned what I know about this (over a decade ago) by studying Ken Evoy's *Make Your Site Sell* ebook and putting into practice what I learned.

In the interim, millions of people have visited my sites and many of those visitors have made purchases based on my recommendations for what I think were worthy products and services. That's how I've earned my living for the last decade or so.

I have one website that attracts thousands of visitors per month and remains a profitable site, even though it hasn't been updated in over a year. It remains my top-earning site for Adsense income and it is a basic HTML-only static site built on the principles I learned from Ken Evoy's ebook way back in the 20th century.

Since then, I've built many websites, most of which failed, using a variety of content management systems (CMS) and blogging software.

There is a lure that's hard to resist when it comes to blogging and using a CMS system. They are easy to install and start. You get a big rush from registering a domain name and putting up new information in a few hours or days.

The problem is that the rush you get from starting the site isn't enough to keep up the enthusiasm for continuing to build the site, and there probably was not enough good planning and research put into the topic of the site to see if it was going to be profitable or not before starting it.

At least, that has been my experience.

I'm learning that the same thing can be true when hiring someone else to build a site for you.

I've talked to quite a few small business owners who have wasted thousands of dollars and years of their time because they hired someone to build their website who knew how to build it but had no clue about how to attract free traffic from the search engines.

A nice site with no visitors will never be successful. A large and growing number of visitors each month is the lifeblood of selling anything on the Internet.

So, what are you to do if you know nothing, or very little, about websites, but you need one

that will help you generate income and not just be a constant money drain?

You could do what I did and spend ten or more years of your life reading and studying everything you could get your eyes on and building dozens of sites to test what you learned, or you could hire someone with the experience and tools to do the job right the first time — while you concentrate on running your business and satisfying your customers.

How much would you be willing to pay to have a website that attracts serious visitors — potential customers — every month for years to come?

As a serious business owner, you probably would not throw out a number at this point, because you'd want to know more. How many visitors? How much income? What are the initial costs? How much does it cost to maintain it? Who's going to do the work? What are the monthly hosting fees? How much trouble will it be to modify the information on the site when things change?

There are a lot of things to consider and most of them have nothing to do with HTML, CSS, FTP, and all the other alphabet-soup of acronyms associated with the technical side of building a site.

(You might be surprised at the number of websites I've looked at in the last couple of years that did not immediately tell what the owner was offering and why you would be better off buying from him or her. People on the web have short attention spans and they are generally in skimming mode when they first visit a website. You only have a few seconds to state your case and give them a reason that will benefit them in order to get them to slow down and actually read what you have to say. Don't waste your visitors' time with non-essentials — give them a reason to consider buying from you so you'll have time to persuade them. Of course, how you do this differs with the type of site you have — sales, informational, and so forth — and the type of business you run.)

One of the things I've learned about most of the small business owners I've talked to is that the most prosperous of them are not “do it yourselfers.” They don't have the time, energy, or desire to take on more tasks and responsibilities, because they are already doing all they have time for just running their business.

Most of them depend on others who specialize in things they need.

If they want legal advice, they hire a lawyer, or have one on retainer — they don't go to law school at night for several years just to learn how to write their own contracts or deal with litigation.

Most of them hire an accountant and/or bookkeeper to keep their business on track and help with financial issues and taxes — they don't become a CPA just to do it themselves.

Most of the small business owners I know who have survived the recent economic downturn have learned the hard way that there are times when it just makes sense to hire someone with experience and expertise to get the job done quickly, efficiently, and right the first time.

Perhaps you're one of those successful small business owners who knows how to prosper by running your own business, but who feels clueless when it comes to evaluating people who claim to be experts at building websites. After all, every town has people who claim to be able to build good business websites, and some of them really do know what they're talking about.

Unfortunately, most of them don't.

You don't have the time and money to pay someone to learn what they're doing at your expense.

How do you separate the experts from the want-to-be herd?

That's the crux of the issue, isn't it?

This can be especially difficult when you don't have the experience to know whether what they tell you sounds reasonable, or not.

One way to separate the experts from the herd is that they tend to spend more time asking you questions about your business and the results you want from your website than they do telling you how good they are at building them.

Another way is to talk to someone who has already been vetted by others who do have the

experience and expertise to know.

That's why I'm personally recommending [Sitesell Services](#) to you.

Sitesell is the company that Ken Evoy founded and which has grown into a top-notch service over the years. The Services part of the business is for business owners like you who want to hire someone to build an effective business website that is custom-tailored to market your business around the clock.

The people at Sitesell hire only experts with demonstrated ability and experience, and they help you select the right person to build your site for you.

Here's a short video about how they can help you...

Once one of these experts is working for you, they follow a time-tested system to build a custom site that will market your products and services to people who are looking for what you have to offer, and these are the hottest prospects.

Is Sitesell Services for everyone? Obviously, the answer is no.

Is it appropriate for every business? Again, no.

But, you'll never know if it could be a good match for your business unless you learn more about it and contact them.



Of course, there is no obligation.

If you're interested in hiring someone to help you build your business online, watch the video and see what they offer.

Act on your dream!

JD

PS. If you're a do-it-yourselfer, you can download a free copy of [Make Your Site Sell!](#) and learn more about what I'm talking about, or you can learn about [SBI version 2.0](#) and see if it offers the tools you want to build and host your own site. I use SBI to build and manage some of my sites and it is easily my tool of choice for any new business sites I may build.

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Tags: [business](#), [traffic](#), [visitors](#), [webmaster](#), [website](#)

Lemons or Lemonade?

February 5, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [8 Comments](#)

Filed under: [Opinions](#), [Success and Failure](#)

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If you've been reading this blog for any time, you know that my attitude changed last year when everything seemed to turn against me.

I bitched and moaned about it for several months and I'm not going to do any of that now.

Last month, I turned the corner and feel like I've finished a dark chapter in my life's story and now I've opened a new, brighter chapter filled with hope, opportunity, and challenges I'm looking forward to meeting.

You know the old saying, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade."

I was reading [Seth Godin's blog](#) and found a very short post that linked to the movie [Lemonade](#).

I took a half-hour and watched that movie and it was inspirational. I want to share it with you, if you haven't seen it.


Here are several people who were fired or laid off and took the opportunity to do something they really loved, instead of just working to earn a paycheck.

The last year or so has been rough for a lot of people. Maybe you.

Have you considered that maybe this is your opportunity to do something you love?

Act on your dream!

JD

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Tags: [fired](#), [laid off](#), [lemonade](#), [lemons](#), [opportunity](#)

iPad is incredible – Apple has done it again!

January 28, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [16 Comments](#)

Filed under: [Apple Computer](#), [Opinions](#)

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I've been a fan of Apple and the Macintosh for a long, long time.

But, I'm not much of a fan of mobile computers, devices, or phones.

I don't have a cell phone and don't want one.

I like listening to music on my Mac using iTunes, but I've never wanted an iPod. In fact, when I won an iPod years ago, I gave it to my grandkids.

So, with that in mind, I haven't been paying much attention to all the hype about the new Apple tablet computer that was going to be introduced.

I didn't even pay much attention yesterday when it was announced.

Today, however, I had some free time and decided to learn something about the new [Apple](#)

[iPad.](#)

I watched the [Keynote Speech](#) where Steve Jobs introduced the iPad and I was hooked.

This is the first time I've been excited about a new product in a long, long time.

The last time I felt this way was when I was given a sneak peek at the original Macintosh.

This was back when all computers were basically text oriented and I saw how easy it was to create and include graphics in documents.

My first thought was, "I gotta get me one of these!"

So, I ordered my first Macintosh about two weeks before they were introduced and got one of the first ones that was shipped to Arizona, where I was living at the time.

Over the years, I have bought several Macs and I've enjoyed every one of them. I know, without a doubt, that I made the right choice when I took the Macintosh route.

I haven't felt that feeling of excitement and admiration again until a few minutes ago.

After watching the keynote speech and the iPad video, I have that same feeling, "I gotta get me one of these!"

Most of my daily work involves browsing the web and dealing with email. The iPad looks like it will handle both of those tasks with ease and panache.

However, even though the touch-screen keyboard (in horizontal mode) looks like it would be usable, I'm so used to touch typing on a keyboard that I just don't think I would be interested in doing much typing that way.

When I saw the keyboard dock for the iPad, that made a huge difference.

I'll still do most of my typing on my desktop Mac, but I think that keyboard dock will make the iPad much more usable for a variety of people.

What clinched the deal was the price.

The base model iPad will be introduced in a couple of months for only \$499 and it comes with 16 GB of flash memory. Two other models are available for \$599 (32 GB) and \$699 (64 GB).

There will be three models that have 3G included, but I'm not interested in those. The base models with WiFi will do all I would be interested in doing.

The iPad will run most of the 140,000 applications that have been developed for the iPhone and iPod Touch, but there are advantages for users that will entice developers to modify their apps or build new ones using the iPad SDK.

Personally, I'm not interested in most of those applications and never will be. I do the majority of my work using a web browser and email client, and the rest is graphics, working with photos, accounting, spreadsheets, and word processing. The new iWork versions of Numbers and Pages look great (especially since they only cost \$9.99), so I'm sure I'll buy and use them.

Many years ago, I decided to quit living on the bleeding edge of technology where you take risks with hardware and software with undiscovered bugs, high introductory prices, and other disadvantages. Since then, I've never bought a 1.0 version of any product and my life has been easier.

This time, however, I really want to get my hands on a brand new iPad as soon as I can.

It's been a long time since I've been this excited about a new product, and it has taken me completely by surprise. I did not expect to be interested, at all, in the iPad.

What about you?

Have you watched the video and/or keynote speech? What do you think about the iPad. Is this something you would be interested in owning and using?

Act on your dream!

JD



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New to Zazzle and liking what I see

January 20, 2010 by [John Dilbeck](#) · [11 Comments](#)

Filed under: [Affiliate Marketing](#), [CafePress](#), [Zazzle](#)



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Selling my own designs on CafePress

I have been selling products in [my CafePress shop](#) for several years and there are many things I like about it.

I enjoy selling my designs and earning commissions on a regular basis, but I'm not much of a graphic designer and there are many things I like that I don't have either the time or the talent to create and sell.

Promoting designs created by others on CafePress

At one point, I was doing well with earning commissions through the CafePress affiliate program, but that dropped to almost nothing when they went from a private affiliate program to using Commission Junction.

CafePress changed the pricing model for products sold through their marketplace

Last year, CafePress made some changes and when one of my designs sells in their marketplace, I earn a smaller commission than when the same product with the same design sells in my shop.

Most of my sales in November and December were through the CafePress marketplace, so my earnings were smaller than they would have been if they were made through my shop.

On top of that, I didn't earn any affiliate commissions.

Getting started with Zazzle

So, I decided today to look into Zazzle and see if it was something I wanted to try.

I have a lot of friends who have either moved from CafePress to Zazzle, or they have shops at both of them.

Getting started with Zazzle is very easy

I set up my account and opened [my brand new Zazzle shop](#) today.

There's not much in it, yet.

Basically, I've chosen a theme, entered a bit about me on my profile page, uploaded my standard profile photo, and set up some of the optional stuff for promotions.

Adding designs and products to Zazzle

Now, it's time to modify some of my best-selling designs and add them to products at Zazzle. That's going to take some time and will be an ongoing process. My goal is to have most of my best selling designs on both CafePress and Zazzle before October, so they'll be ready to promote in time for the massive November-December buying season.

I'll start later this week with one of my best selling designs on CafePress and see what it takes to add it to multiple products on Zazzle. I'm sure there will be differences and I may run into obstacles as a result of my experience with CafePress and being so new to Zazzle. We'll see if these are serious obstacles or just speed bumps.

Zazzle has their own private affiliate program

In addition to selling my own designs, I'm looking forward to trying their affiliate program and selling designs created by other people that I find and like.

For instance, when browsing through their marketplace, this afternoon, I found a design that cleverly combines two things that speak to me, and possibly to you, with a bit of humor.

I'm a huge Star Trek and Star Wars fan and I was really angry last year with the bailout of

banks and financial institutions that were considered too big to fail.

That's why I laughed when I saw this design:



[Death Star: Too Big to Fail](#) by [starwars](#)

Browse more [Death T-Shirts](#)

A lot of people use the abbreviation, "lol," to say that they laughed out loud when seeing something. I don't make a habit of that, but I really did laugh out loud when I saw that design.

I like it better than my own [Too Big To Fail](#) design.

The nice thing is, if someone sees this and buys either a product with my design or the more clever death star product then I'll earn a commission.

I enjoy earning a commission.

Really.

The more, the better!

Even though I don't have a single product in my Zazzle shop, yet, I can still earn by promoting other people's designs, and I like that.

When I have products in my shop, then I can benefit from any other Zazzle shop owners who choose to promote my products.

A sale of one of my designs through someone else's affiliate link slightly reduces my earnings, but that's more than made up for by their promotional efforts, so I'm happy to share part of the profits with them.

There are significant differences between CafePress and Zazzle

So, I still have a lot to learn about Zazzle, but I'm liking what I've seen and learned up to this point.

Another difference between CafePress and Zazzle is that you have to pay for a premium shop on CafePress in order to have multiple designs in your store, but on Zazzle, it's totally free.

Even though it only costs about \$7 per month for a premium shop on CafePress, this ought to appeal to you if you don't want to pay anything and still have a way to earn money through online marketing.

Discussing Zazzle on Squidoo Marketing

I've started a discussion in the [Zazzle Group](#) on my Squidoo Marketing community for discussing opening a Zazzle shop, creating designs, adding them to products, and promoting them.

Since I'm a complete newbie on Zazzle, I'll use myself as a guinea pig and talk about some of the things I do to create the products and market them.

I'm sure I'll make some mistakes and I may have some ideas you never thought of, so I'm hoping it will be a useful discussion. You can see it here:

[I am a newbie to Zazzle – do you have any advice?](#)

That discussion is primarily for people who enjoy using Squidoo to market their products, but we'll also be discussing other avenues of promotion and sales. You're welcome to come and join us there, if you want.

In conclusion...

I like what I see so far at Zazzle and I'm looking forward to exercising what they offer and promoting designs I find that were created by other people, too.



I'm looking forward to seeing if I can develop a new, reliable, and growing income stream with Zazzle.

What about you?

Do you have any thoughts about CafePress, Zazzle, or either of their affiliate programs?

Act on your dream!

JD

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Tags: [apparel](#), [designs](#), [make money](#), [t-shirts](#)

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